

Sam Abraham House
Clifton Townsite
Park Avenue at Highline Road
Clifton
Greenlee County
Arizona

HABS No. AZ-181

HABS
ARIZ
6-CLIFT,
12-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HABE
APZ
6-CLIFT;
12-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SAM ABRAHAM HOUSE

HABS No. AZ-181

Location:

Clifton Townsite, Park Avenue at Highline Road, Clifton, Greenlee County, Arizona

Significance:

Associated with early and important Clifton resident Sam Abraham, and with the development of Clifton.

Description:

The Sam Abraham House is buffered from Park Avenue by a lushly-landscaped front yard. Several additions to the rear of the original building consume most of the back yard. The house is a one-story wood frame building with a side gable roof. The original house is a National Folk style house of the Hall-and-Parlor type. Much of the west front of the house is obscured with vegetation. The original windows are wood double-hung. Exterior materials include wood clapboard siding and asphalt shingle roofing. The additions, most of an early date, have more than doubled the size of the house and were added incrementally in piecemeal fashion. A separate wood frame garage building sits adjacent to the original house.

History:

The original core building of this frame construction conglomeration of additions dates to ca. 1901. It has been expanded and modified several times during the historic period. It is associated with Samuel Abraham, an early Clifton hotel owner and banker, who constructed it on land leased from the Arizona Copper Company.¹

Sam Abraham was a member of the close-knit Jewish community in Arizona. Clifton had a strong and vibrant Jewish population dating to the early 1870's when the Lesinsky brothers began copper mining operations. Like the Lesinsky family, Abraham came to Clifton from Silver City, New Mexico, in 1879. Abraham was born in San Francisco on December 18, 1863, and moved to Silver City at age 14. He married Laura Dorsey in 1890. In 1902, Sam Abraham took over ownership of the Clifton Hotel from Mrs. M. Abraham. Sam Abraham continued to operate the Clifton Hotel until his death in 1924. The Clifton Hotel and the Abraham house shared a certain degree of architectural similarity, as both consisted of several buildings and additions as the result of expansions during boom times. In his later years, Abraham was active in the First National Bank of Clifton. Abraham directed the construction of a new bank building in 1920 and the acquisition of the People's Bank and Trust in 1921. The First National Bank of Clifton failed in 1923 in the uncertain economic climate following World War One. It never reopened. Sam Abraham fell ill in late November of 1924 and traveled to a hospital in El Paso for treatment. He died on December 10, 1924, and is buried in Silver City, New Mexico.²

Sources (endnotes):

1. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps 1901, 1904, 1908, 1914, 1931; Arizona Copper Company 1920 base map; Arizona Copper Company lease records at University of Arizona Special Collections.
2. Biographical information on Sam Abraham taken from the Copper Era December 19, 1924 (I, 1: 1); see also December 5, 1924 (I, 1: 4) and December 12, 1924 (I, 1: 3-4). On the acquisition of the Clifton Hotel, see the Copper Era April 3, 1902 (I, 3: 2). The Copper Era describes Abraham's banking activities on April 16, 1920 (I, 5: 3); June 24, 1921 (I, 1: 8); February 23, 1923 (I, 1: 5-6); April 6, 1923 (I, 1: 5-6); May 18, 1923 (I, 1: 2-3); and June 1, 1923 (I, 1: 4).

Historian: Robert G. Graham, AIA, Ryden Architects, Historical Architect/Project Coordinator

Douglas Kupel, Consulting Historian

Ryden Architects
645 North 4th Avenue, Suite A
Phoenix, AZ 85003

September, 1994